

# WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2) CONTRACT AND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

201 E. Washington Avenue, GEF 1, Room D203  
Madison, WI

**Friday, May 18, 2001**

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

## **MINUTES**

The W-2 Contract and Implementation Committee is the single point of contact for feedback to the Department of Workforce Development on policy implementation related to W-2 agencies, and includes representation from the Wisconsin County Human Service Association (WCHSA), Urban Caucus counties, W-2 private agencies in Milwaukee County and the balance of state, and Tribal W-2 agencies.

### **COMMITTEE:**

#### **Members (Present = X)**

Eric Baker.....DES/AO  
William B. Adams.....Racine County  
Jon Angeli .....Southwest Consortium  
X Phyllis A. Bermingham .....Marathon County  
Doris Green.....OIC  
X Tina Koehn.....UMOS  
X James Nitz .....Kaiser Group  
Laverne Plucinski.....Bad River Chippewa  
X Jewel Reichert.....Fond du Lac County  
X Adelene Robinson.....Kenosha County  
X Shirley Ross .....La Crosse County  
X Liz Green.....Dane County  
X Jerry Stepaniak .....MAXIMUS  
Julia Taylor.....YW Works  
Glynis Underwood.....ESI  
X Michael Van Dyke .....Door County

#### **Alternates (Present = X)**

Jan Alft.....Marathon County  
Linda Brandenburg .....ESI  
X Cheryl Cobb.....UMOS  
X Mona Garland.....OIC  
X Deb Hughes.....Southwest Consortium  
Edward Kamin III .....Kenosha County  
Richard L. Kammerud .....Polk County  
X James Krivsky .....Racine County  
X Barbara Metoxen.....Oneida Nation  
Tom Miller.....La Crosse County  
X Teresa Pierce .....Workforce Connections,  
Inc  
X Rita Renner .....YW Works  
Chris Schmitz .....Fond du Lac County  
Sara Shackleton .....Dane County

### **State Staff**

#### **Attendees:**

Cori McFarlane, BDS  
Gerry Mayhew, BDS  
Jude Morse, BDS  
Shawn Smith, AO  
Ceri Jenkins, BWCA  
Ron Blascoe, BWI  
Dianne Reynolds, BWCA

Lynn Schmitt, BDS  
Stephen Dow, BWCA  
Paul Saeman, BWI  
Mary Rowin, AO  
Margaret McMahon, BWCA  
Christine Williams, BDS

#### **Guests:**

Dorothy Buckhanan, ESI  
Jane Batha, Curtis and Assoc.  
John Wilberding, Maximus  
Kevin Loef, Kenosha County  
Char Manowski, OIC  
Judy Steinbicar, RCHSD

Mitch Birkey, Sheboygan Co. HHSD  
Kaye Krenske, ESI  
Carol Madaris, WCCF  
Neil Naftzger, YW Works  
Jane Ahlstrom, AFSCME Council  
Marilyn Putz, Walworth Co., Kaiser Group

#### **Recorder:**

Jayne Wanless, W-2 Contract & Implementation Committee Coordinator

### **Welcome**

Eric Baker is in Milwaukee attending a DWS Reorganization Town Hall meeting so Mary Rowin will take his place as chair of today's meeting. Next month the IMAC Committee members changed their meeting date to June 21<sup>st</sup> because of a Human Services Conference scheduled during the prior week. To coincide with the IMAC meeting the committee changed the C&I meeting to June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Minutes Approval**

A motion was made by Jim Krivsky to approve the April minutes and seconded by Jewel Reichert. Motion carried.

**Issue/Discussion: Monthly CARES Update Report, Christine Williams, ASD**

Ms. Williams provided a handout regarding upcoming changes to CARES. In June CARES staff will adjust the worksheets in benefit recovery. The power cascade will go into affect next week to simplify verification for MA and adjust for COLA errors. The adjustments to the clocks will be made in June to incorporate 60-month extensions. In July automation screens for sanctioning drug felons will be added. The security conversion is scheduled throughout the summer.

Ms. Hughes asked whether the rumor of Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA) moving to Gstars is true. Ms. Williams had not heard such a rumor.

**Issue/Discussion: Monthly Training Update Report, Gerry Mayhew, BDS/Training Section**

The first classes for new workers will be held in Mosinee in June. To learn new curriculum regional staff attended train the trainer activities. Training staff is traveling around the state explaining how to use the new system. The new trainings include the work program subsystem for WAA and Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The training section received very positive feedback. Ms. Mayhew thanked the committee for support during the development of the new training initiative.

Ms. Mayhew requested their continued support for pre-requisites requirements. Certain classes have pre-requisites such as self-study materials or classes that workers must complete prior to starting certain training sessions. If a person has not completed the pre-requisites, he/she will not be allowed to take the class until the pre-requisites are complete. Managers will be checking pre-requisites.

The new trainings are being put on tape for auditory learners and soon will be available on videotape.

**Issue/Discussion: Biennial Budget Update, Shawn Smith, AO**

The projected revenue shortfall is \$600,000,000. This shortfall will drive a lot of decisions. The Department taking proactive steps and met with each member on the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee. The meetings focused on TANF items and the shortfall in the budget for the Child Care Program. The projections show a 95 million-dollar deficit if the Child Care Program remains the same. The Committee is currently looking to find increased funding for the Child Care Budget.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau projects a 78 million dollars deficit assuming the state receives the same amount of TANF funding. W-2, Child Care and Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA) are areas of expressed interest in the Department.

The Joint Finance Committee addresses the Department's issues next week. Joint Finance Committee plans to vote on the Department's issues on Monday and Tuesday, the calendar is on the internet. The committee should complete their review of the budget and send it to the Senate by the second week in June. Mr. Nitz questioned the effect money issues will have on the contract amounts. The Joint Finance Committee questions have centered around the types of services provided and the reason WAA is important when the money is not being spent. Mr. VanDyke questioned whether a study has been done to look at paying childcare on enrollment base instead of actual attendance. He would like this information presented at the next meeting. Ms. Smith stated she would get back to the committee members regarding this information.

Mr. VanDyke stated that he heard that current W-2 contract allocations would decrease. Ms. Rowin said the allocations will not be final until after the budget passes. The most recent revision in the allocations occurred because the Department used the current contract allocation levels and did not reconcile them with the Governor's Budget. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) found the discrepancies in the amounts. In addition, in the past the allocations have included sanctions (estimated at about 14%). In the future the Department will allocate benefits net of sanctions, like the Governor's Budget. The 14% estimated sanctions were removed from the benefits in the allocations proportionately across all agencies.

In response to a concern that LFB have most up to date caseload numbers, the Department agreed to get current caseload numbers to Victoria Carreon.

Ms. Morse stated that the Department recognizes that taking the same percentage from each agency does not reflect an actual sanction amount because sanctions are not the same through out the state. It may be possible to do some sort of reconciliation at the end of the contract period to reflect actual amount. Ms. Bermingham pointed out that not reconciling sanctions penalizes agencies for having compliant customers. Mr. Van Dyke recommended having recoupment in mid-contract and at the end of the contract. Mr. Krivsky said part of the caseload is not sanctionable, such as CMC and would like that to be taken into account. In the past the contracts have been on track at the end of the year.

One committee member commented the 97-99 contract values do not match with current contract allocations and seem to favor Milwaukee agencies. The past contract included Community Reinvestment and start-up funds for agencies, which could

be perceived as an inequity between agencies. Milwaukee agencies had to remodel buildings and were dealing with greater start-up costs compared to the balance of the State. Ms. Morse stated that it might look like Milwaukee got something extra however the balance of the State had a greater percentage left for profit at the end of the 97-99 contract period. Ms. Ross pointed out that the agencies were not told up-front that Milwaukee agencies would not have the sanction amount taken out of their funding, the other agencies found out due to the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) Report. It would have been better if had known from the beginning about the different treatment. Mr. Nitz expressed his concern that a 5% funding cut in Milwaukee may cause agencies to back out of contract and this needs to be addressed with the Legislature. He added agencies see an increase in caseloads with cuts in funding, makes it difficult to keep staff. Ms. Rowin pointed out that an agency could choose to transfer money from services to benefits. The committee does not think this is a viable option. Ms. Pierce questioned the State's contingency plan if caseloads go up and money runs out. Ms. Rowin said the Department is aware that some small agencies are questioning whether to continue their W-2 contracts. The department will wait to see the results of the Right of First Selection process.

**Issue/Discussion: Next Contract Update Jude Morse, BDS**

The timetable has been revised to move the competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process ahead one week so the competitive RFP process will start closer to the ending of the Right of First Selection (RFS) Plan review process. Ms. Morse does not anticipate any new requirements in the RFS process. RFS agencies must respond to all Response Items unless it clearly states RFS response is not necessary. Mr. Nitz commented that the RFS process seems more labor intensive than a blank RFP. Ms. Morse acknowledged that RFS W-2 agencies may experience the RFS process as labor intensive, especially if the W-2 agency has not been updating their Plan since it was submitted for the last procurement process. Ms. Morse said the Contract Terms for the 2002-2003 W-2 and Related Programs Contract require the W-2 agency to do 6 month updates to keep information current in the Plan. Hopefully this will reduce the workload for the next W-2 Contract (2004-2005) and result in a more stream lined process. Ms. Garland questioned whether the procurement number that needed to be on every page for the last RFP is necessary on the current RFS Plan. Ms. Morse said the number is not necessary for this contract process.

Each review teams will consist of two people from regional office (not necessarily the same region as the agencies Plans being reviewed) and one person from central office. Each section of the RFS Plan will receive a rating and there will be a rating for the overall Plan. The ratings are:

- Acceptable as is;
- Acceptable with revisions; or
- Unacceptable.

Regional office staff will work with agencies that need to revise their Plan to obtain an acceptable rating.

**Issue/Discussion: TANF Reauthorization Update Shawn Smith, AO**

Ms. Smith requested input from the committee regarding whether to incorporate the wording "services to fragile families" in the TANF reauthorization platform. She voiced a concern that more specifics may limit the State's flexibility. Ms. Hughes voiced her support for flexibility to remain the focus. Ms. Bermingham expressed concern that TANF won't involve meeting the needs of the hard to serve families and suggested the phrase "hard to serve families" instead of "fragile families". Mr. Van Dyke suggested to consider the population currently served by TANF, most are fragile families. Ms. Garland stated that the national reauthorization conference focused on fragile family issues. Mr. Krivsky pointed out services to fragile families looks as if TANF should fund child welfare services and move funds over to the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS). Ms. Smith said she would work on the wording so TANF funds are used to interface with other agencies to reduce barriers. Ms. Smith will share draft platform, if it is developed, with group. Ms. Smith will provide a reference sheet on TANF web sites at the next meeting.

**Issue/Discussion: Status Report Regarding Issues from 05/04/01 Q&A Session**

A handout was distributed to the group covering the Department's responses to questions that might be helpful in the review of the W-2 contracting materials.

Ms. Pierce questioned who is a qualified assessing agency for domestic abuse. W-2 agencies define a qualified assessing agency; it could be domestic abuse shelter staff or counselor

Workers Compensation is still available to W-2 agencies.

**Issue/Discussion: Performance Standards Paul Saeman, BWI**

The work plan to include the additional information in the CARES system for the Performance Standards is on target. The informational map will be on the work web in November. Training to address the changes will be offered prior to the beginning of November.

Highlights of the plan include:

- begin and end wage will be in CARES in November.
- new activity codes added in August.
- new agencies added to the structure by November.
- data capture for assessments in the Data Warehouse added in December.

**Issue/Discussion: Satisfaction Survey Ron Blascoe, BWI**

Ron Blascoe led the committee through a power point presentation outlining the Satisfaction Survey. It included a handout of the script the surveyor will follow when contacting the participant and sample questions.

**Questions and Concerns the committee expressed during the presentation**

- The number of people that prefer another language are higher than the survey is projecting.
- There are greater barriers to contacting people that need to be taken into account, such as hearing impaired participants.
- Many Job Centers try to reduce agency identification, surveyor will have to identify services in order to identify the provider.
- Transfers between agencies can sometimes take more than 2 months, might not even start program when surveyed
- How are the 2 months figured for a participant?
- Are regression characteristics going to be figured into the outcomes, for example if a person's sanctioned or food stamp amount reduced the month of the survey?
- The committee requested a timeline of when the Department is surveying participants and when to expect results.
- The committee requested "very satisfied" put as the first choice on the written and verbal survey.
- Have surveyor tell participant their answers will not affect their benefits.
- Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) clients are referred from Income Maintenance worker, the referral does not mean has started the program.
- Participants may ask program or referral questions, want a general referral source so a participant's answers are not skewed.
- Thought question number #10 was misleading and may not properly reflect the agency because people may not be comfortable going anywhere to ask for benefits.
- If a person is unable to recall receiving services will you still ask them the survey questions?

Mr. Blascoe recommended e-mailing additional comments and suggestions to him. Ms. Rowin suggested this topic be added to next month's agenda to address comments and concerns. Ms. Cobb requested representatives from the committee be involved in the design process for the tabulation report.

**Issue/Discussion: Turnover Survey & Training Tracking Gerry Mayhew, BDS**

Customer Service training is the most popular, Diversity training is cancelled the most often due to lack of participants. Supervisor and managers rarely attend training and lack understanding of workers' issues. The FEP Retention survey indicated half left because of work tasks. Look to develop a training to teach FEPs ways to deal with stress and to understand the feelings they have on the job, hope to increase the quality of work life and retain employees. To develop the new training, the Department will contact FEPs by phone to survey their interest.

Tracking training attendance will continue in the same manner as in the past. A worker's training history is tracked by their Social Security number. Ms. Hughes questioned how people who do not give out their social security numbers are tracked. Ms. Mayhew's responded they track the workers training using a false number correlated with the workers name.

**Issue/Discussion: 60-Month Policy-Draft Operations Memo Margaret McMahon, BWCA**

Margaret McMahon handed out a draft Operations Memo and requested feedback from the committee members by May 25, 2001. Ms. McMahon explained that the committee would see many of their suggestions in the memo. Some case management suggestions are being addressed outside the 60-month policy. These include an assessment piece, SSI advocacy and earlier intervention efforts that happen throughout W-2. The Department did not choose to add an additional tier.

The 20% undue hardship threshold to exceed the 60 month lifetime limit under Federal TANF funding is greater than expected. The count included SSI caretaker supplement payments and Kinship Care cases, it increased the numbers to around 3000 cases. The projection indicates 800 people in extension status by 2003. General Program Revenue will not be necessary to fund extensions for a long time.

Since the beginning of W-2, 60-month policy has been part of the administrative rules, emphasizes temporary assistance. The Department realizes some cases need assistance for a longer period of time. The TANF clock includes JOBS Program, W-2 payment tiers including Trial Jobs and other TANF funding. Operations Memo 00-22 outlines the federal and the state clocks. First participants reach the 60-month time limit in September of 2001. In February the Department sent a report to the regional offices listing participants who are on track to hit 60 months in September. The report is now automated on EOS C747. Fifty-one participants are expected to reach 60-months in September.

Ms. McMahon stated she would not go through every recommendation included in the policy because it's in the Operations Memo. The Department did not accept the recommendation for a two-year extension, the extensions are for one-year with the opportunities for subsequent extensions. Regional staff will conduct a six-month review; agencies will not be required to supply additional documentation for the review. The recommendation for not ticking the clock for months the client received zero payment is being handled outside the 60-month policy. Extension cases will be included in the performance standards.

The Department learned a lot from the 24-month extension process. The criteria for the 24-month policy is set in law while the 60-month policy is contained in administrative rules, much more flexibility with the 60-month policy. The Department has combined the criteria to make it as similar as possible. The 60-month extension takes precedence over the 24-month extension. This means if the participant is going to hit their 60<sup>th</sup> month within 6 months of hitting the end of the 24-month clock, an agency applies for the 60-month extension. A future Coaches Corner and Proshop will include tips to assist workers in figuring out appropriate extension. The Department is altering the extension request forms to include the 60-month extensions, the forms are basically the same except for some additional language. On June 20<sup>th</sup> the CARES provisions are going to be added.

During the 24-month extension policy development process included 13 Operation Memos, this time around hoping to reduce the number, agencies should expect at least 2 more. One will include CARES instructions and another regarding the CMC policy. A Custodial Parent of an Infant (CMC) client who has reached their 60-month time limit does not meet the extension criteria laid out in policy and may only need 12-week extensions until able to return to work. An additional code will be added to CARES for a parent who meets CMC criteria who needs a 12-week extension. Details are still being worked out.

Ms. McMahon presented to half the regional meetings, Data Central in Milwaukee and met with the trainers regarding the 60-month policy and draft Operation Memo. She received positive feedback. Ms. McMahon requested another forum in Milwaukee to make sure she is reaching the right audience.

Mr. VanDyke questioned whether a month where no cash benefit was issued to the client during the JOBS program counts against the 60-month clock. Ms. McMahon answered participation counts in W-2 but unsure about JOBS and will get back to the committee. Administrator's Memo 01-09 addresses ticking of the TANF and State clocks.

#### **Issue/Discussion: Proper Action regarding Non-Participation Margaret McMahon, BWCA**

W-2 addresses non-participation with payment reductions and strikes. Agencies question proper steps for participants who has are not fully engaged, benefits are sanctioned to zero and will not sign off on W-2 and the clock continues to tick. Some receive a first and second strike but agencies seem hesitant to impose a third strike, which would limit the participant from any future W-2 payment. To address this issue the Department will look at underutilized policies or development of new policies. Sometimes non-financial eligibility seems to be skipped such as job search or refusal to go to an assessment. New policy guidelines may offer an option to close a case due to ongoing payment reductions or means to resolve non-participation issues. Ms. McMahon is putting together an issue paper to address the way strikes are being applied around the State and the percentage of people receiving reduced payments. Ms. McMahon plans on consulting with Legal Action of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Council on Children and Families on this issue.

Ms. Renner stated she received instructions not to use the third strike. All Milwaukee agencies received the same instructions. A committee member commented this is a political issue in Milwaukee. Agencies requested to receive clearance from the State to use third strikes. Mr. Dow said that they would receive something in writing regarding the use of the third strike.

#### **Issue/Discussion: Draft of Medical Capacity Form Jayne Wanless, BWCA**

Jayne Wanless passed around a draft of the revised Medical Capacity and guidelines requesting feedback from the committee members. The new form emphasizes what a participant is able to do. It includes an explanation of W-2, examples of activities that could be included in an employability plan and questions about further assessment. The new form includes check boxes and removed the chart that was on the previous form. The redesigned form is being reviewed by the a group of doctors from the Wisconsin Medical Society, Public Health Nurses, DHFS staff, Social Security Liaisons, a lawyer who specializes in SSI advocacy and staff through out the state. Ms. Wanless traveled to the Eau Claire, Ashland, Rinelander regions and the Milwaukee Data Central meeting to get feedback and suggestions. The guidelines will be issued in an

Operations Memo. Most of the guidelines are common sense. Ms. Wanless highlighted a few guidelines:

- Medicaid no longer uses the form so could tailor the form directly to W-2.
- The addition of an annual timeline in cases where the restriction exceeds a year or no change in the condition is expected.
- The form can be used as a communication tool between the Social Security Administration and the W-2 Agencies.

The revised form and guidelines should be out to agencies around June 1<sup>st</sup>. Please send feedback and suggestions to Ms. Wanless by 5/25/01.

**Issue/Discussion: OTHER –**

**EA Grant Tracking**

Agencies notice a large increase number of EA applications due to the addition of impending homeless. Currently there is no way to track if an individual receives a grant in another part of the State. Mr. Krivsky questioned whether an EOS report could track the data. Ms. Williams stated it is possible to create a database without going through CARES. A central staff person needs to look at options and address this topic at the next meeting.

---

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**        **June 22, 2001**  
                                      **10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
                                      **201 East Washington Ave.**  
                                      **GEF 1, Room D203**  
                                      **Madison**